DEFIANT

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THE GOOD GUYS

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GREY YEAKUM '93

ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA, NOVEMBER ,1993

TO GAZE INTO THE EYES OF YOUTH...

...TO PROSTRATE BEFORE ALL BEGINNINGS...

TO WISH A MILE HIGH

ZAPPO! THE MIGHTY WIZARD ZACHARIAH FRIES THE EVIL ORCS WITH A FIREBALL! THEY'RE TOAST!

HEY, ZACK. CHECK IT OUT! ROB LIEFELD IS SIGNING AUTOGRAPHS AT THE MILE HIGH COMICS STORE. TODAY!

WRITTEN BY JAN CHILDRESS
WITH JIM SHOOTER
DRAWN BY GREY
ART ASSISTANCE BY
ALAN WEISS & ADAM POLLINA
INKED BY CHARLES YOAKUM,
ALAN WEISS & ADAM POLLINA
LETTERED BY AGNES PINAHA
AND MIKE DELEPINE
COLORED BY TOM ZILKO,
TIM PERKINS, JANET JACKSON,
BENJAMIN JUNG AND
SU MCTEIGUE
EDITED BY DEBORAH PURCELL

WHO'S HE?

YOU KNOW MORTAL KOMBAT? HE'S THE GUY THEY MODELLED GORO AFTER.

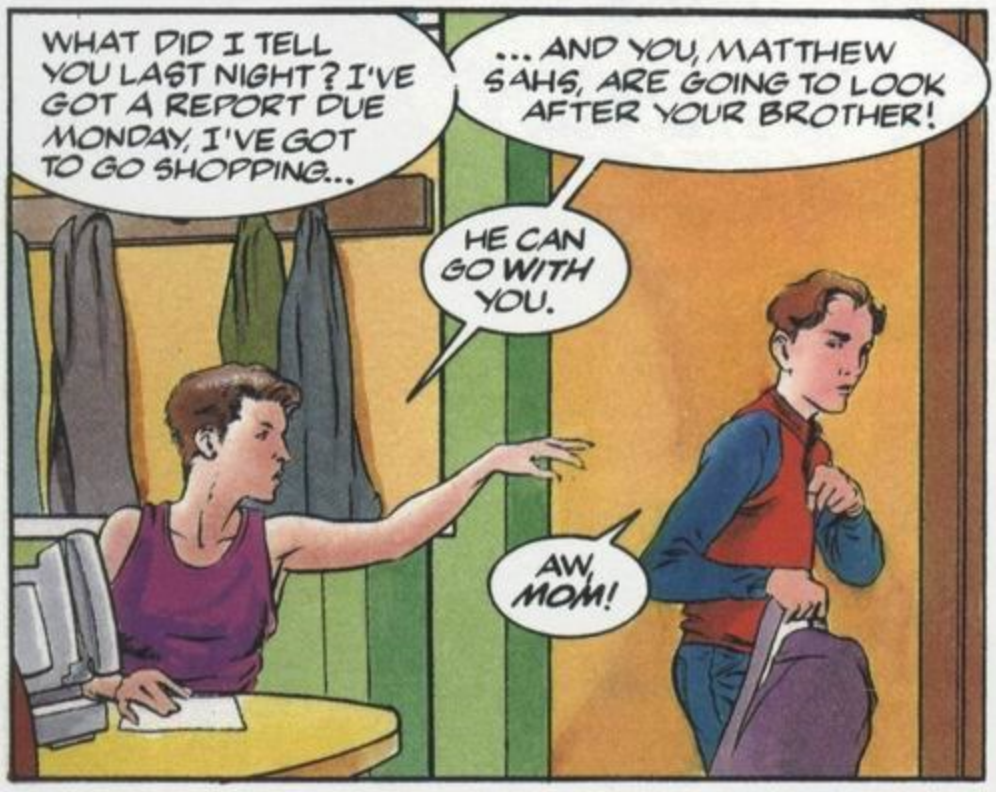
HE'S LIKE, HUGE, YOU KNOW, AND HE'S GOT FOUR ARMS...

WOW! REALLY? COOL!

HA! GOT ANOTHER ORC!

CREATED BY JIM SHOOTER. DEVELOPED BY JIM SHOOTER WITH JANET JACKSON, DAVID AND MARIA LAPHAM, CLARK SMITH, DEBORAH PURCELL, ED POLGARDY AND GREY. CHARACTERS DEVELOPED BY JIM SHOOTER, JANET JACKSON, DEBORAH PURCELL, GREY, JAN CHILDRESS, MIKE BARR, ED POLGARDY AND RAFAEL GUITEAU. FEATURING THE GOOD GUYS CASTING CALL CONTEST WINNERS: PAUL COHEN AS FRONT, MATTHEW GYRICH AS SKRAG, DANIEL JACOB AS RECON, REGINALD JACKSON AS NOBODY, JENNI LEE AS WHITE CRANE, LAURA NEALE AS FLEX, ZACHARIAH SAHS AS SPELLCASTER, AND BEGINNING IN ISSUE #2, JEFF MILLER AS HEATER

DWEEB. ROB LIEFELD IS THE COOLEST COMICS ARTIST GOING, OKAY?
REALLY? CAN HE DRAW FOUR COMICS AT ONCE?
OH, MAN, GEEZ, YOU'RE A DWEEB!
MATTHEW? WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
TO COLLECT MY PAPER ROUTE, MOM.


WHAT DID I TELL YOU LAST NIGHT? I'VE GOT A REPORT DUE MONDAY, I'VE GOT TO GO SHOPPING...
... AND YOU, MATTHEW SAHS, ARE GOING TO LOOK AFTER YOUR BROTHER!
HE CAN GO WITH YOU.
AW, MOM!

AND STOP TELLING HIM THOSE WILD TALES. HE'S ONLY EIGHT -- HE BELIEVES EVERYTHING YOU TELL HIM!
HE STILL BELIEVES IN THE EASTER BUNNY!
MATTHEW!
OKAY!

SOON...
MATT? I'M GOING TO BE A SORCERER WHEN I GROW UP. WHAT ARE YOU GONNA BE?
OLDER. HURRY UP, BUTT-HEAD. I WANT TO GET MY MONEY. MOM SAID SHE'D TAKE ME TO THE MILE HIGH STORE LATER.
THERE'S SOME BACK ISSUES I REALLY NEED!

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FIRST HOUSE...

NOBODY HOME.

SIXTH HOUSE...

...AND A WHOLE *DIME* TIP!

NINTH HOUSE...

MAN! I *KNOW* THEY'RE HOME, BUT THEY WOULDN'T ANSWER THE DOOR! IT'S LIKE A *CONSPIRACY!*

WOW! *REALLY?*

C'MON, DWEEB.

TWELFTH HOUSE...

SORRY, KID. IF YOU CAN'T BREAK A HUNDRED...

YEAH. I'LL COME BACK NEXT WEEK.

MATT, DO YOU THINK THEY ALL *KNOW* YOU NEED THE MONEY FOR COMICS, AND THEY ALL GOT TOGETHER... OR... HEY!

MAYBE AN EVIL SORCERER MADE A *SPELL* ON YOU!

OH, *SHUT UP,* YOU LITTLE...

WAIT A MINUTE. I KNOW ONE HOUSE THAT *ALWAYS* PAYS.

YEAH... THE OL' SIMPSON HOUSE! BUT ...I DON'T THINK YOU WANT TO GO THERE WITH ME, ZACK. IT'S *DANGEROUS!*

SEE, IT'S... *HAUNTED!*

WOW. *REALLY?*

YEP. I'VE NEVER SEEN WHOEVER LIVES THERE. I JUST THROW THE PAPER ON THE PORCH... AND EVERY WEEK THERE'S AN ENVELOPE FOR ME UNDER THE MAT.

THE KID WHO HAD THIS ROUTE BEFORE ME *DISAPPEARED,* YOU KNOW... AND THEY FOUND HIS BIKE IN *THIS* YARD!

DIDN'T THE *POLICE* COME?

YOU KIDDING? EVEN *THEY'RE* AFRAID TO GO IN THERE!

YOU GOTTA SNEAK UP TO THE PORCH AND GET YOUR MONEY ***QUICK***... OR ELSE THEY'LL DRAG YOU INSIDE, AND...

WELL... THEY SAY THE GHOSTS OF A ***LOT*** OF PAPER-BOYS HAUNT THIS PLACE....

MATT, DON'T GO UP THERE!

I NEED THE MONEY! *SHH!*

MA-ATT! DON'T!

DWEEB.

OKAY... HERE GOES.

HUH?!

YAHHH!

WELL! YOU MUST BE THE *PAPERBOY*. DID I STARTLE YOU? SORRY.

I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER SEEN YOU BEFORE. YOU LOOK LIKE A NICE YOUNG MAN.

I DIDN'T *LIKE* THE LAST BOY. I'M GLAD HE'S *GONE*.

UH... UH... I'M COLLECTING, MA'AM... O-OKAY? PLEASE.

SILLY ME. I'VE FORGOTTEN YOUR ENVELOPE.

COME *IN*. I'LL GET YOUR MONEY.

UM... WELL...

OH, COME *ON*. I'M NOT GOING TO *BITE* YOU!

HAVE A SEAT ON THE COUCH. I'LL GET YOU SOME ICED TEA. YOU MUST BE THIRSTY.

THAT'S OKAY. I'LL JUST, UH, TAKE MY MONEY AND GO, OKAY? THANKS ANYWAY.

SIT *DOWN*, IT WON'T HURT YOU TO SIT FOR A MINUTE.

I GET *SO TIRED* OF BEING ALONE.

UM... MA'AM? I REALLY HAVE TO GO, OKAY?

MA'AM?

HERE YOU ARE, SWEETHEART. A NICE, COOL, ICED TEA. IT'LL HELP YOU RELAX.

THANK YOU, BUT I'M REALLY NOT THIRSTY, MA'AM.

OF COURSE YOU ARE! IT'S NOT POISONED OR ANYTHING!

LADY, I DON'T WANT ANY ICED TEA! I WANT MY MONEY AND I WANNA GO!

STAY AWAY FROM ME!

I'M SORRY. I JUST CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE. SO LONELY...

HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN? HUNDREDS OF YEARS. HUNDREDS!

IT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE LIKE THIS. WHEN A WISH COMES TRUE... IT'S SUPPOSED TO MAKE YOU HAPPY.

A LONG, LONG TIME AGO, WHEN MY LOVER WENT AWAY, HE GAVE ME A PRESENT.

THAT. THAT BOX!

HE SAID THAT WHEN I OPENED IT, IT WOULD FULFILL MY DREAMS... MAKE MY WISHES COME TRUE.

ALL I WANTED WAS TO BE WAITING FOR HIM WHEN HE RETURNED...

...AND I... I OPENED THE BOX!

BUT HE NEVER CAME BACK! I'M STILL WAITING... WAITING FOREVER!

I HATE THIS BOX... BUT I'VE ALWAYS BEEN AFRAID OF WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN TO ME IF I GOT RID OF IT.

THERE'S A CONSTRUCTION SITE DOWN THE STREET. A BOY LIKE YOU COULD SLIP INSIDE AND BURY IT IN THE WET CEMENT.

HERE-- BEFORE I LOSE MY NERVE! I'LL PAY YOU-- TAKE THIS-- IT'S ALL I HAVE!

HURRY! THE BOX COULD BE DANGEROUS IN THE WRONG HANDS. AND, WHATEVER YOU DO... DON'T OPEN IT!

ZACK! ZACK!

I'M HERE! I WAS LISTENING THROUGH THE MAIL SLOT!

WOW! I'LL BET A SORCERER GAVE HER THAT BOX!

YOU BETTER DO WHAT SHE SAID WITH IT, MATT-- RIGHT AWAY!

LATER. LET'S JUST GET OUTTA HERE, HUH? LET'S GO HOME!

LOS ANGELES AIRPORT...

HMM. NO, I DIDN'T SEE A GIRL WHO LOOKED LIKE THAT ON THE FLIGHT. DAUGHTER?

YEAH. LIVES WITH HER MOTHER IN LAUDERDALE. I HAVEN'T SEEN HER FOR SIX MONTHS.

LOOKING FOR SOMEONE, HANDSOME?

HI, DADDY!

WHAT'S THE MATTER? DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE YOUR OWN DAUGHTER?

LAURA?!

WHAT HAPPENED TO MY SCRAWNY LITTLE CHERUB-FACED GIRL?

UMF! WHAT A GRIP.

MOM LET ME TAKE UP BODYBUILDING. WELL, SHE SORTA DIDN'T CARE. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

IT'S... DIFFERENT.

UH, LAURA, I KNOW YOU'RE PROBABLY TIRED AFTER YOUR TRIP, BUT WOULD YOU MIND IF I MADE A QUICK STOP ON THE WAY HOME?

A COMPETITOR OF MINE IS HAVING A SPECIAL EVENT AT HIS NEW COMIC BOOK STORE. I WANT TO CHECK IT OUT.

CAN I HELP YOU WITH THOSE BAGS, SWEETIE?

OH, DAD, COME ON. THESE ARE NOTHING.

ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA. HOME OF DISNEYLAND, THE LOS ANGELES RAMS, AND THE **MILE HIGH COMICS MEGASTORE...**

EXCUSE ME.... WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WHAT'S THE CROWD FOR?

I THINK I SAW HIS PICTURE IN A MAGAZINE ONCE. HE'S AN ARTIST, RIGHT?

ROB LIEFELD'S SIGNING AUTOGRAPHS. GET IN LINE.

MAN, YOU MUST BE FROM **WAY** OUT OF TOWN... LIKE, **MARS.**

HEY, IS THAT FREE SODA FOR, LIKE... ANYBODY?

I THINK SO. YOU OUGHT TO CHECK OUT SOME COMICS WHILE YOU'RE HERE. LOTS OF GREAT STUFF HAPPENING LATELY.

SIGNING LINE FORMS HERE

COMICS & CARDS

FREE SODA

Mile High Comics

CARDS

SCIENCE FICTION

COMICS

ALMOST, I'M FROM YAAK, MONTANA. WE JUST MOVED HERE. I HAVEN'T READ COMICS FOR A WHILE.

WHAT'S YOUR NAME, PAL?

DANIEL JACOB.

THANKS FOR THE RIDE, MOM.

CALL ME WHEN YOU'RE READY TO COME HOME. ZACK, STAY CLOSE TO MATT.

COME ON, ZACK. HURRY UP!

I LOVE YOU, TOO, DARLING. HAVE FUN.

I CAN'T WAIT TO GET MY YOUNGBLOOD NUMBER ONE AUTOGRAPHED. WHAT ABOUT YOU, PAUL?

YEAH... BUT I WANT TO BUY SOME ROBOCOP AND IRON MAN BACK ISSUES, TOO.

HEY, REGGIE, HOW COME YOU NEVER TALK OR MOVE OR 'NOTHIN'? YOU DEAD?

THERE'S THE SIGN. WE'LL BE THERE IN A SECOND CREW.

CUT IT OUT!

HEY, WHY ARE YOU GUYS ALWAYS PICKING ON REGINALD? HE'S JUST QUIET, OKAY? LEAVE HIM ALONE!

WHOA! PAUL, YOU'RE CRAZY! WAIT'LL I STOP THE CAR!

THANKS FOR THE RIDE, AMIGO!

YOU'RE AN IDIOT, PAUL, YOU KNOW THAT? YOU'RE GONNA BREAK YOUR ARM!

DID THAT LAST YEAR. HEY, LOOK AT ME, I'M DAREDEVIL WAY UP ON A ROOF LEDGE!

AND, INSIDE...

OUTSTANDING! THIS ISSUE IS FRAUGHT WITH ALLEGORICAL REFERENCES, CLASSICAL ALLUSIONS, AND INSIGHTFUL SOCIAL COMMENTARY!

I LIKE THE FIGHT SCENES... AND THE BABES!

FOR PHILOSOPHICAL MUSINGS, I READ BONE.

MATT, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LEAVE YOUR KNAPSACK THERE, ARE YOU? THE BOX IS STILL IN THERE!

AHH... DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

MOM, DAD, YOU WANT ME TO SHOW YOU MY FAVORITES?

ARE THEY THE SAME AS THE ONES I PICKED UP FROM THE FLOOR OF YOUR ROOM FOR YEARS, MY CHILD?

WE'LL PICK YOU UP AT FIVE-THIRTY, JENNI.

I TOLD YOU TO DO WHAT THE LADY SAID RIGHT AWAY!

I DIDN'T WANT TO BE LATE FOR ROB LIEFELD. BESIDES, IT'S NO BIG DEAL. SHE'S PROBABLY JUST NUTS!

OOPS. SORRY.

S'OKAY.

HEY! CLAREMONT AND MILLER'S WOLVERINE!

I SAW IT FIRST!

SORRY. MINE.

NO WAY!

LET GO! WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, BUB?

BUB? EVEN WOLVERINE DOESN'T SAY THAT ANYMORE!

HE USED TO. AND I LEARNED ENGLISH FROM READING THOSE ISSUES!

GOOD THING FOR YOU THERE'S ANOTHER ONE HERE... OR I'D SHOW YOU SOMETHING ELSE I LEARNED FROM WOLVERINE.

HEY, SHE-HULK IN THE FLESH!

WOW! SCOPE THOSE MUSCLES!

WONDER WOMAN. YEAH!

JUST IGNORE THEM, LAURA. THEY'RE PIGS..

IT'S OKAY, DAD. I LIKE IT!

I WISH I REALLY WAS AS BIG AND STRONG AS HER. THE WHOLE WORLD WOULD PAY ATTENTION TO ME THEN.

WELL... STEVE FINGERMAN, RIGHT? YOU OWN THE COMICS CRYPT STORES....

LET'S SEE... DAN NEALE, ISN'T IT? HERE TO STEAL SOME OF ROZANSKI'S IDEAS?

JUST PAYING RESPECTS, FINGERMAN. I'M NOT A SLEAZE LIKE YOU.

WOW! COOL, MISTER LIEFELD.

THANKS.

MY SOLUTION TO RAPIDLY ESCALATING BACK-ISSUE PRICES.

STUFF 'EM IN A COAT POCKET, AND HEAD FOR THE DOOR. RIGHT, BRAINS?

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF A LITTLE *FIVE-FINGER DISCOUNT*, ARE WE, FELLAS?

UH, WHAT'S THAT?

ARE YOU SOME KIND OF MORON?

YES, HE IS.

LOOK, MISTER, WE--

BEFORE YOU EVEN GET INTO IT, LET ME SAY I LIKE YOUR STYLE. YOU GUYS HAVE *CHARACTER*.

TELL YOU WHAT. YOU SWIPE ALL THE EARLY *IMAGE* TITLES YOU CAN GET YOUR FILTHY HANDS ON, AND I'LL GIVE YOU FOUR DOLLARS A BOOK.

ONCE YOUR POCKETS ARE FULL, DOG-EAR AND DAMAGE AS MUCH OF ROZANSKI'S MERCHANDISE AS POSSIBLE, AND I'LL GIVE YOU A *BONUS*-- TWENTY BUCKS EACH!

IT'S THAT OR I TURN YOU IN.

YOU GOT A DEAL.

WHATTA WE GOTTA DO?

YOU KNOW, SLOB, SOMETIMES I WISH I COULD REACH INSIDE YOUR HEAD AND SHAKE YOUR BRAIN!

FLYING... NOW THAT WOULD BE GREAT! WAY UP IN THE AIR YOU COULD SEE FOREVER. EVERYTHING!

I WISH I WAS SO TOUGH NOBODY COULD MESS WITH ME!

AWESOME!

CHECK IT OUT, REGINALD-- COLOSSUS! BETCHA HE NEVER BROKE AN ARM.

THIS PREDATOR DUDE IS SMOKIN'. HE CAN FADE OUT, AND NOBODY CAN SEE HIM. IF I COULD DO THAT...!

AFTER I GET MISTER LIEFELD'S AUTOGRAPH, WE'LL CALL MOM.

WHERE'D YOU GET THE MONEY TO BUY ALL THAT STUFF?

THAT WEIRD LADY GAVE ME TWENTY DOLLARS.

TWENTY! AND YOU SPENT IT WITHOUT EVEN DOING WHAT SHE SAID?

I'LL **DO** IT, OKAY? LATER. WHAT GAME ARE YOU PLAYING?

WAR OF THE GODS. YOU CAN MAKE YOUR OWN HERO.

MY CHARACTER IS **SPELLCASTER.** HE'S A SORCERER...

...JUST LIKE WHOEVER ENCHANTED THAT LADY'S BOX!

I'M **TELLING** YOU, MATT, YOU'D BETTER DO WHAT SHE SAID **RIGHT AWAY!**

LAY OFF, ALREADY, WILL YA?

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS MAGIC. SHE'S JUST CRAZY, OKAY?

HERE, **I'LL** SHOW YOU MAGIC. HOW ABOUT I MAKE YOUR GAME GEAR DISAPPEAR?

HEY!

IT'S **GONE,** ZACK! OOOH! MA-A-AGIC!

SAY "MAGIC IS BOGUS"!

GIMME THAT! GIMME MY...! I'M TELLIN' **MOM!**

NO! C'MON!

IT'S BOGUS! THERE'S NO SUCH THING! COME ON, SAY IT!

NO, IT'S REAL. COME ON, MATT! GIVE ME MY GAME GEAR, OR--

OR WHAT? YOU BIG BABY!

HEY, THAT KID TOOK YOUR KNAPSACK!

YEAH, RIGHT. NICE TRY, DWEEB. YOU JUST WANT TO MAKE ME LOOK, SO YOU CAN...

HE'S NOT KIDDING, MAN.

OH, GEEZ, MATT, THE BOX! IT'S IN YOUR BAG!

UH-OH...

HEY! HEY, THAT'S MY BAG!

HOLD 'EM OFF, SLOB. I'M OUTTA HERE.

STOP HIM! GET HIM!
COME BACK HERE!
RAIDERS
YOU SCREWED UP, BUB! THERE'S NO EXIT BACK THERE!
WHOA...!
THAT GUY STOLE MY BAG! OUTTA MY WAY!
HEY, JERK!
EASY, LITTLE GUY! WHAT'S WITH YOU KIDS?
LOOK OUT! GOTTA GET HIM BEFORE HE CIR-CLES BACK TO THE DOOR!
MAN, I WISH I COULD JUMPOVER THIS MOB!
NOW I GOTCHA!
SLOB!
URFF!
WHERE'S THE FIRE, HOMEY?

UHH... HEY!

KID...

...YOU OUGHTA WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING.

MY BAG... THE GUY... HE'S GETTING AWAY!

SLOW DOWN, BOY! WAY I SEE IT, YOU'RE CAUSIN' TROUBLE.

OMPH!

A FIGHT!

GET OUTTA MY WAY! GOD, I WISH I COULD CARVE YOUR FAT BUTT INTO LITTLE PIECES.

TOO BAD YOU'RE JUST A... UH... LITTLE GEEK!

HA!

UHH! MAN...! I'M STUCK!

SEEYA, FATSO.

I'LL POUND YOUR FACE IN, KID!

WHA...?

GOTCHA!

HEY, THIS IS MY KNAPSACK! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

LIAR! IT'S MINE!

SLOB! WHERE ARE YOU! I NEED YOU!

YOU'LL NEED MAJOR SURGERY WHEN I'M THROUGH WITH YOU, UNLESS YOU LET GO! MAN, I WISH I COULD...

OKAY! OKAY!

WHOA!

OH, NO!

PLEASE...

...DON'T LET IT...

...COME OPEN!

AHHHH!

WHAT WAS THAT... EXPLOSION?

EXPLOSION? WHAT EXPLOSION?

WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM? DID HE FAINT?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM? IT WAS LIKE A BOMB WENT OFF RIGHT NEXT TO HIM!

YEAH.

THERE WAS A FLASH OF LIGHT AND A BIG BOOM! EVERYBODY MUST'VE HEARD IT FOR MILES! BUT... MOST PEOPLE HERE DIDN'T SEEM TO NOTICE!

IS HE OKAY?

I THINK SO.

OPENED... IT OPENED...

...AND MAGIC ... CAME OUT....

YOU TWO GET OUT OF MY STORE, AND STAY OUT!

YEAH. HEY, I FEEL... FUNNY, BRAINS.

ME, TOO. LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.

LET'S GET HIM OUTSIDE. HE JUST NEEDS SOME AIR!

MAYBE HE OUGHTTA GO TO THE HOSPITAL.

NO, HE'LL BE OKAY.

ARE WE THE ONLY ONES WHO SAW WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

I GUESS SO.

IT WAS WEIRD. I FEEL REALLY STRANGE.

HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT.

MAYBE HE JUST GOT THE WIND KNOCKED OUT OF HIM.

JUST BREATHE DEEP, ZACK.

THE BOX...YOU GOT THE BOX DIDN'T YOU, MATT?

UH...UM, NO, BUT...

SOME KID TOOK IT. HE GOT IN THAT BIG CAR THAT'S PULLING OUT.

OH, NO!

BOX? WHAT WAS IN IT? COMICS?

NO! MAGIC! WE GOTTA GET IT BACK!

ZA-ACK! IT'S OKAY, IT'S NO BIG DEAL... PROBABLY.

HE LAND ON HIS HEAD?

WE GOTTA CATCH HIM!

HOW? HE'S GONE, KID!

WHAT'S THAT?

WOW! IT'S A DOORWAY... LIKE IN A VIDEO GAME.

IT'LL TAKE US TO THAT KID! I KNOW IT!

I'M GOING TO GET THAT *BOX* BACK!

ZACK, DON'T GO NEAR THAT! ZACK!

OH, WOW!

ZACK! OH, GEEZ, I GOTTA CATCH HIM. MOM WILL *KILL* ME!

THIS IS *FREAKY*. WHAT DO WE DO?

IT LOOKS LIKE...

...WE'VE GOT NO CHOICE!

JUST LIKE A VIDEO GAME. JUST GET *NEAR* A DOOR, AND IT SUCKS YOU IN!

ZACK, WHERE *ARE* WE? THIS LOOKS LIKE THE INSIDE OF ONE OF YOUR *GAMES*.

WHAT *IS* THIS PLACE?

YEP

UH-OH, I HEAR SOME-THING...

...THAT SOUNDS LIKE TROUBLE.

YIKES!

HOLEE! LOOKOUT, EVERYBODY!

ZACK! ZACK, GET US *OUT* OF HERE!

CLICKITY SHIKK!

SNAP!
CLICKITY!
OH, WOW!
I'M SCARED TO DEATH OF BUGS, ESPECIALLY BIG ONES!
I CAN GET IT -- I GOT MAGIC IN ME! I KNOW HOW TO ZAP IT! GET OUT OF THE WAY!
RUN, PAUL!
HELP ME! AEEEE!
YII! IT'S FAST! IT'S GONNA GET ME!
OH, NO! IT'LL KILL HIM.
GOTTA HELP HIM!
OH, GOD, I...I HATE BUGS!

GET OFF HIM!

UH! OH...! TH-THANKS!

THAT THING JUST DISAPPEARED WHEN SHE SLAMMED IT INTO THE WALL!

LET ME GIVE YOU A HAND. HEY! I CAN'T *TOUCH* YOU!

NEITHER COULD THE SCORPION! SOMETHING LIKE A SHELL CAME AROUND ME!

HEY, LOOK AT ME! I JUMPED ALL THE WAY UP *HERE!*

YES! ME TOO!

COPYCAT.

WE'VE *ALL* GOT MAGIC IN US! THE *BOX* DID IT! IT MAKES *WISHES* COME *TRUE!*

HEY, WHERE'S *REGINALD?*

I'M *HERE*. I JUST... FADED OUT. IT WAS *SPOOKY!*

WOW! YOU CAN GO *INVISIBLE!* COOL!

NO--IT WAS SCARY. I MEAN ...THINGS LOOK WEIRD FROM... THE SPACE I WAS IN.

I GUESS I'M JUST HAVING A REALLY WEIRD *DREAM.*

NO-- IT'S *REAL!*

THIS LADY GAVE MY BROTHER A SORCERER'S MAGIC BOX-- WHICH HE WAS *SUPPOSED* TO BURY, BUT HE DIDN'T...

...AND SOME KIDS TRIED TO STEAL IT, AND IT CAME OPEN, AND IT SPRAYED US WITH *MAGIC*....

WHAT, AND TURNED US INTO A *VIDEO GAME*?

NO, IT MADE OUR *WISHES* COME TRUE. THAT'S WHAT IT *DOES.*

I BROUGHT US HERE. I'M A *SORCERER* NOW.

HELP!

I... I CAN'T GET DOWN!

I FEEL LIKE I'M WALKING ON AIR, ONLY... IT'S LIKE I HAVE TO LEARN HOW TO WALK ALL OVER AGAIN!

WELL... *GO* WITH IT THEN.

MAYBE IF HE FLAPPED HIS ARMS?

HE MUST'VE WISHED HE COULD *FLY.*

HEY, LOOK OUT! *BEHIND* YOU!

OH, *NO!* IT'S *GORO*... FROM *MORTAL KOMBAT!* ZACK, WHAT HAVE YOU GOTTEN US *INTO*?

MEANWHILE...

WHY WERE YOU IN SUCH A HURRY TO LEAVE THE COMICS STORE, RIDGELY?

DID YOU FIND WHAT YOU WANTED?

I FOUND SOMETHING... VERY INTERESTING.

OH?

THE KEY TO POWER... ON GLOBAL SCALE!

YES. VERY INTERESTING, INDEED!

TAKE ME TO MY FATHER'S FACTORY, GEOFFREY. THE EL SEGUNDO PLANT. IMMEDIATELY.

SOON...

WHY DID YOU WANT TO COME HERE? THE PLACE IS ALL LOCKED UP FOR THE WEEKEND. YOU CAN'T GET IN.

SILENCE. NEVER QUESTION ME.

YOU WILL OBEY ME INSTANTLY AND WITHOUT HESITATION, GEOFFREY. UNDERSTOOD?

I... ALL RIGHT. I NEED THIS JOB.

GIVE ME YOUR BEEPER. NOW.

WHAT GAME ARE WE PLAYING, RIDGELY?

THIS IS NO GAME.

THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF AN EPOCH!

RIDGELY! HOW DID YOU OPEN THAT GATE?

I TOLD YOU-- NO QUESTIONS. AND FROM NOW ON, FOOL, YOU WILL CALL ME MASTER!

YO! WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?

I WALK WHERE I PLEASE, AND WHEREVER I WALK... I AM *MASTER.*

YOU ARE CAPTAIN OF THE SECURITY GUARD, ARE YOU NOT? SUMMON YOUR MEN. I WISH TO *INSPECT* THEM.

HE'S THE OWNER'S SON, ISN'T HE?

YES, BUT... SOMETHING'S *HAPPENED* TO HIM. HE'S *CHANGED.* I DON'T MIND TELLING YOU... HE *SCARES* ME.

MOMENTS LATER...

SLOPPY... *SLOVENLY*... PITIFUL SPECIMENS, ALL OF YOU... BUT I SUPPOSE YOU'LL HAVE TO *DO.*

WHAT?

I DON'T CARE WHO THIS RUNT'S DADDY IS, I'VE HAD ABOUT ENOUGH OF THIS.

YOU WILL HEAR AND *OBEY* ME...

...OR I'LL DESTROY YOU WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT!

CAPTAIN! GEOFFREY! COME WITH ME. THE REST OF YOU STAND BY FOR MY ORDERS.

SHORTLY...

THESE ARE YOUR INSTRUCTIONS.

IT LOOKS LIKE... YOU'RE REBUILDING THIS PLANT INTO A *FORTRESS!*

PRECISELY. THE ASSEMBLY LINE ROBOTS WILL BUILD EVERY-THING I REQUIRE ONCE YOU PROGRAM THEM AS SPECIFIED.

DO NOT FAIL.

SIR, THE REST OF THE GUARDS HAVE BEEN DEPLOYED AS ORDERED.

EXCELLENT, CAPTAIN. YOU WILL SUPERVISE THE CONSTRUCTION.

GEOFFREY, YOU WILL REMAIN HERE WITH ME.

RIDGE -- I MEAN *MASTER*-- WHY ARE YOU *DOING* ALL THIS ? WHAT WILL YOUR FATHER SAY?

MY FATHER!

WHEN I WAS MERELY A CHILD, I BELIEVED THAT MY FATHER WAS THE MOST BRILLIANT MAN ON EARTH! A *GENIUS!* RICH... POWERFUL...

I SAW OTHER MEN *JUMP* WHEN HE GAVE ORDERS.... I HEARD HIM TALK ABOUT *CAPTURING* NEW MARKETS... *CONQUERING* NEW TERRITORIES... *VANQUISHING* COMPETI-TORS.

I SAW HIM AS THE LORD... THE *KING* OF ROBOTECHNOLOGY, INC..... I THOUGHT THE *WORLD* WAS AT HIS FEET.

I ALWAYS WISHED THAT I WERE *JUST LIKE HIM!* AND NOW... I *AM* WHAT I IMAGINED HIM TO BE.

I INTEND TO CONQUER THE *WORLD*, GEOFFREY!

AND WHAT MY FATHER WILL *SAY* IS AN OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO ME... OR HE WILL *DIE!*

MEANWHILE...

HE CAN'T HURT *ME!*

COME ON, KID! I'LL GET YOU OUT OF HARM'S WAY.

WOW! GORO'S FIST WENT RIGHT *THROUGH* THAT KID. WHEN HE FADES OUT... *NOBODY'S THERE!*

I'LL HIT HIM HIGH!
ME, TOO!
DON'T WORRY, I GOT HIM!
WHEEE! I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M SO *STRONG*! THIS IS GREAT!
NO, NO! *THAT'S* NO WAY TO FIGHT!
GLLK!
HELP... ME....
TAKE ME *CLOSER*--I KNOW WHAT TO DO. *HURRY!*
GONNA *FRY* HIM... WITH A *FIREBALL!*
YAHOOO! HE'S *TOAST!*
ULLLGH... HUHH!
MAN, AM I A SORCERER, OR *WHAT?*

NICE WORK, ZACK!

I *TOLD* JA MAGIC IS REAL!

WHY'D YOU LET HIM *GRAB* YOU?

I DON'T KNOW. ALL OF A SUDDEN I'M *REALLY* STRONG BUT... I DON'T REALLY KNOW HOW TO... YOU KNOW, PUNCH OR ANYTHING. I WAS NEVER IN A FIGHT BEFORE.

I THINK YOU DID FINE. I'M *DAN*. LET ME HELP YOU UP.

WHOO! THE "NOBODY'S THERE" KID IS BACK WITH US. SPOOKY!

LAURA. THANKS.

ZACK, I... MAN, YOU MUST BE *RIGHT*.

THERE WAS MAGIC IN THAT BOX, AND IT *CHANGED* US.

YEAH. IT MADE US WHAT WE *WISHED* FOR. IT MADE *YOU* LIKE THE SUPER-HEROES YOU LIKE... AND *ME* A SORCERER.

I ALWAYS WANTED THAT NOTHING COULD HURT ME. AND REGINALD IS PRACTICALLY INVISIBLE *NORMALLY*.

YEAH.

SUDDENLY I'M *FAST* AND *STRONG* AND *AGILE*... BECAUSE I LIKE THE SAME HEROES AS ZACK'S BROTHER!

I CAN *FLY*... AND I CAN SEE BETTER, TOO. I SEE *EVERYTHING*.

ANYBODY GOT A *BUS* THEY WANT ME TO BENCH PRESS?

THIS IS AWESOME... BUT WE GOTTA GET THE *BOX* BACK! THE LADY SAID IT WAS DANGEROUS IF THE WRONG HANDS GOT IT.

SO HOW DO WE GET OUT OF HERE?

WHEN YOU FIGHT YOUR WAY THROUGH A LEVEL IN A GAME, A *DOOR* USUALLY APPEARS.

BETCHA THERE'S ONE...

...THERE!

WE'RE BACK!

THIS ISN'T ANAHEIM. WHERE ARE WE?

WHO CARES WHERE WE ARE. WHERE'S THE BOX?

DOORS DON'T TAKE YOU RIGHT TO SOMETHING... JUST NEAR IT.

THEN... I THINK I SEE A CLUE.

THAT IS NOT YOUR AVERAGE INDUSTRIAL PARK BUILDING. LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODY'S REBUILDING IT INTO A FORT...

... IN A MAJOR HURRY. WOW, IT'S CHANGING RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES!

THAT'S ABOUT AS STRANGE AS... AS WE ARE.

IT'S THE KID WHO TOOK THE BOX! HE MUST BE DOING THAT.

SO WHAT DO WE DO? CALL THE POLICE?

NO, THEY'D BE AFRAID TO GO IN THERE. IT'S UP TO US.

LOOK, ZACK... MOM'D KILL ME IF I LET YOU DO ANYTHING DANGEROUS... AND IT'S MY FAULT THE BOX GOT STOLEN. I'LL GO GET IT BACK.

MOM SAID STAY CLOSE TO YOU. I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU GO BE A SUPERHERO BY YOURSELF AND HOG EVERY-THING.

SUPERHEROES? OH, COME ON!

I'M READY FOR ANYTHING. LET'S GO!

WE NEED NAMES. I HAVE SOME...

YEAH... WE HAVE TO DO IT RIGHT. EVERYBODY THINK ABOUT WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU CAN DO. I'M GOING TO MAKE A SPELL.

THE FLIER IS RECON, OKAY?

THE ARMORED ONE... HMM... CARAPACE? STEELSKIN?

HOW ABOUT FRONT? IT'S A 'HOOD THING.

THE MUSCLE LADY IS FLEX!

NEAT!

THE INVISIBLE MAN IS... NOBODY!

YEAH.

I WANT TO BE SKRAG! HEY, HOW DO YOU COME UP WITH ALL THESE NAMES SO FAST?

I'M ALWAYS MAKING UP CHARACTERS. I'VE GOT ZILLIONS OF THEM!

LITTLE WIZARD, YOU'RE...

SPELLCASTER! OKAY?

AND I'M WHITE CRANE. IT'S A ASIAN THING.

AND TOGETHER WE'RE... HMM... WELL, WE CAN FIGURE THAT OUT LATER!

AND, INSIDE...

MY NEW IMAGING SYSTEM DEVELOPS LIKENESSES FROM VERBAL DESCRIPTIONS. CLEVER, ISN'T IT?

YES, SIR.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE PEOPLE I NOTICED DEMONSTRATING AWARENESS OF THE EXPLOSION OF ENERGY FROM THE BOX!

UH... *MASTER?* A SECURITY CAMERA HAS PICKED UP SEVEN INTRUDERS APPROACHING GATE SIX. ONE OF THEM IS... WELL... HE'S *FLYING.*

DON'T JUST STAND THERE! ORDER YOUR MEN TO *KILL* THEM!

BUT... THEY'RE *KIDS!* I CAN'T DO THAT!

YOU *DARE* DISOBEY ME?

LOOK, THERE ARE *LIMITS!*

NOT FOR ONE SUCH AS I!

AGGHH!

YOU ARE FORTUNATE THAT I STILL REQUIRE MANPOWER.

ATTENTION, SECURITY FORCE! OBSERVE THE NEAREST MONITOR, AND YOU WILL SEE A VIDEO REPLAY OF THE MILD *WARNING* YOUR CAPTAIN JUST RECEIVED!

THERE WILL *BE* NO WARNING FOR YOU IF YOU DISOBEY.

KILL THE INTRUDERS!

NEAR GATE SIX...
WATCH IT-- THAT FENCE IS ELECTRIFIED!
DANGER 1,000,000 v.
LET ME AT IT. NOTHING CAN HURT FRONT...
...I HOPE.
YEAH... THIS IS GREAT!
AND, YOU KNOW, IT FEELS LIKE MY PROTECTIVE SHELL MAKES ME STRONGER, TOO.
YEAH!
NOT BAD. HE'S NO FLEX, BUT NOT BAD.
RACE YOU TO THE DOOR, SKRAG.
YOU'RE ON, CRANE!
WHITE CRANE.
NO FAIR-- YOU STARTED AHEAD OF ME!
LAME EXCUSE. I WIN!
UH-OH. I DON'T LIKE THE DOOR PRIZE!
RECON, GO GET 'EM! HIT 'EM!
HIT THEM? GEE... I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT.
I'M NOT INTO THAT... BUT I GUESS I COULD DISTRACT THEM.
HI!
ED, I'VE BEEN TRYING TO MISS SO FAR, BUT HOW CAN I WHEN HE'S THIS CLOSE?
WE HAVE TO SHOOT HIM, JOSE, OR THE MASTER'LL ROAST US.

WAY TO GO, RECON!

OW!

TRY NOT TO HURT THESE GUYS, SKRAG! I BET WHAT'S GOING ON HERE ISN'T THEIR FAULT...

...AND WE ARE THE GOOD GUYS!

THEY'VE TURNED A FORKLIFT INTO A TANK. TAKE COVER!

I AM COVER. STAY BEHIND ME, GUYS.

GET DOWN, FLEX!

YIKE!

UFF!

IT CAN'T HURT ME, BUT I CAN'T STOP IT.

S'OKAY...

...THE MIGHTY WIZARD ZACK... UM, SPELLCASTER, FRIES THE EVIL TANK WITH A FIREBALL!

YEOW! GANGWAY!

MEANWHILE, IN THE LABORATORY...

UNBELIEVABLE!

I'VE ANALYZED IT A *THOUSAND WAYS*-- IT'S JUST A *BOX*. JUST AN *EMPTY BOX*!

IT'S *USELESS*!

I'D ASSUMED IT *HAD* TO BE AN ULTRASOPHISTICATED QUANTUM-FIELD GENERATOR DESIGNED TO ACTUALIZE CONCEPTUAL REALITIES BY ALTERING QUARK-SPIN... BUT *NO*!

WHAT?

A... A WISH-GRANTING MACHINE, DOLT! A QUANTUM-PHYSICS ANSWER TO ALADDIN'S LAMP!

WELL... *SOMETHING* ALTERED THE QUANTUM FIELD. MAYBE IT WAS A NATURAL PHENOMENON -- A *REALITY-QUAKE* THAT CAUSED A *RIFT*...

OR... COULD IT BE... THAT THE *LITTLE BOY* WHO WAS AT THE EPICENTER OF THE EVENT WAS THE TRUE SOURCE?

IN THEORY, ONE *UTTERLY FOCUSED* HUMAN MIND WOULD BE *CAPABLE* OF ALTERING THE Q-FIELD.

I WONDER WHY HIS MIND IS *SO POTENTLY FOCUSED*?

IN COMICS, THEY'D GLIBLY PRONOUNCE HIM A *MUTANT*. MUTANTS -- WHAT AN ABSURD CONCEPT! TO THINK I USED TO READ THAT CRAP!

AT ANY RATE, CLEARLY *HE* THINKS THIS IS A "MAGIC" BOX. THAT'S WHY HE AND HIS FRIENDS TRACKED ME HERE.

THIS BOX MAY HAVE A USE AFTER ALL! IT'LL SERVE AS *BAIT* TO TRAP THE *REAL* PRIZE...

...THE CHILD!

NEARBY...

THE OFFICES AND STUFF ARE THAT WAY. WHOEVER'S RUNNING THIS SHOW'S PROBABLY IN THERE.

LET'S GO!

NOBODY? REG... C'MON. DON'T LAG BEHIND.

HEY, LOOK! THERE'S A KID -- AND HE HAS THE BOX!

WHOA. SLOW DOWN, LITTLE WIZARD! HE MAY BE TRYING TO LEAD US INTO A TRAP!

WE CAN'T LET HIM JUST GET AWAY.

BESIDES, WHAT TRAP COULD BOTHER US?

I DON'T SEE ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS.

LET'S GO!

A FEW STEPS LATER...

HEY! OUR RETREAT'S CUT OFF!

SO? WHO WANTS TO RETREAT?

I HOPE WE DON'T. WHATEVER IT'S MADE OF, I CAN'T DENT IT!

UH-OH...

WE'RE SEALED IN ON ALL SIDES!

NO KIDDING?

SUDDENLY...

YEOW! LASERS!

AND EVERYTHING ELSE I EVER SAW IN A COMIC!

DON'T WORRY-- I'LL GET US OUT!

THERE. THIS'LL TAKE US FAR AWAY!

ZACK! LOOK OUT BEHIND YOU!

MATT!

HOLD ON, ZACK!

HE'S GONE!

WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE WE GET KILLED.

THEY'VE GOT ZACK!

THE DOOR'S FADING! IF WE'RE GOING, WE'VE GOTTA GO!

WHY AM I EVEN SAYING THAT? WE CAN'T RUN OUT ON THE LITTLE KID.

GOTTA KEEP TRYING!

NOT FAR AWAY...

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO *DO*?

SEVER HIS HEAD, EXTRACT HIS BRAIN, PRESERVE THE KEY LOBES IN AN ENRICHED PLASMA BATH...

...AND USE HIS CEREBELLUM THE WAY I'D *INTENDED* TO USE THAT WORTHLESS *BOX*--

--AS MY PERSONAL "ALADDIN'S LAMP."

DON'T WORRY, GEOFFREY, HE WON'T FEEL A THING. HE'S BEEN SEDATED. I'M NOT A *CRUEL* MAN-CHILD.

KNOCK-KNOCK.

WHAT? WHO'S THERE?

NOBODY.

YOU? BUT THE TRAP WALLS WERE CHARGED SO THAT NOT EVEN *YOU* COULD SLIP THROUGH!

WASN'T EVER IN IT. SLOW POKE.

POKE YOU.

OW!

YOUNG MAN!

HUH?

AAAAHHH!

THANK YOU!

WHUH... WHA'S ... GOAN ONNN?

NOBODY!

YEAH.

PUT A SPELL ON THAT KID, HUH?

I'LL GRAB THE BRAT!

NOT LIKELY, DOLT... AND THE DAY WILL COME THAT I CUT YOUR *TONGUE* OUT FOR SAYING THAT!

YEOW! DUCK!

BOOKIN'.

DON'T WORRY, I KNOW WHERE THE SWITCHES ARE!

HE'S GONE. BETTER HELP PAUL AND THEM.

YEAH! WHERE'S *MATT*... AND... AND...

I'LL SHOW YOU.

SECONDS LATER...

HI, GUYS! *SPELLCASTER* AND *NOBODY* TO THE RESCUE!

WHY SO SOON?

WHAT HAPPENED?

I'LL TELL YOU ON THE WAY HOME.

I SAW ON THE BAD KID'S TV'S THAT THERE ARE POLICE COMING. WE'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE WE GET BLAMED FOR THE MESS! I'LL MAKE US A MAGIC *DOOR*.

HOW ABOUT WE JUST SNEAK OUT THE BACK AND *WALK*. I DON'T THINK I CAN DEAL WITH ANOTHER GIANT SCORPION TODAY.

NEXT DAY, AT THE SIMPSON HOUSE...

MAN, I HOPE SHE HASN'T, YOU KNOW, AGED A ZILLION YEARS OVERNIGHT AND BECOME A SKELETON, AND...

GO ON, MATT!

HUH. WHAT DO YOU BOYS WANT SO EARLY IN THE MORNING?

UM...WE CAME TO RETURN SOMETHING TO THE LADY THAT LIVES HERE.

MY WIFE. SHE'S NOT UP. WHAT IS IT?

HER MAGIC BOX. I WAS SUPPOSED TO PUT IT IN CEMENT... BUT I DIDN'T, AND NOW... IT DOESN'T SEEM *RIGHT* TO DO THAT, BUT...

...IT'S NOT *OURS*, AND, UM... I'LL RETURN THE MONEY SHE GAVE ME AS SOON AS I GET IT, OKAY?

UM, AND TELL HER ME AND MY FRIENDS ARE GOING TO TRY TO USE WHAT THE MAGIC DID TO US FOR *GOOD*, OKAY? THANKS.

OH, LORD...!

I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE'S ON THE MAGIC BOX KICK AGAIN.

MARTY? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

THROWING THIS BOX AWAY. AGAIN.

WHAT IS IT, HELEN? WHAT *POSSESSES* YOU TO TELL THOSE CRAZY STORIES TO PEOPLE? *KIDS*, YET.

I...I DON'T KNOW.

AT THAT AGE THEY PROBABLY BELIEVED WHATEVER YOU TOLD THEM.

I'M SORRY.

I THINK IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO VISIT THE *DOCTOR* AGAIN, HELEN, OKAY?

MADE IN TAIWAN

OKAY...

THE END, FOR NOW.